



## The Practice of Trust

Covenant Group Session Plan

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

Based on material from *Soul Matters-Small Group Living Love Through the Practice of Trust*

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### Welcome, Chalice Lighting:

We gather today to receive the blessings of trust. May the relationships in this room remind us we do not have to depend only on ourselves. May the quiet we share help us to hear and renew our faith in that still small voice inside. May the music sung inspire us to hold tight to the restorative rhythms of the world. May the words offered remind us that we too have a voice, one that must be trusted and shared.

With our hearts open, let us begin.

~Rev. Scott Tayler, UU Minister and former UUA Director of Congregational Life

**Personal Check In:** Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

### Opening Words:

March is a mentor we must learn to trust—  
The greening threshold of the ancient year  
When soil revives and skies abruptly clear,  
Seeds struggle into sunlight, as they must.  
We feel within ourselves that upward thrust,  
That sense of something constant drawing near,  
Something whose steadiness allays our fear,  
Its gifts ubiquitous but not discussed.

How confidently spring makes promises  
The Steller's jays seem certain it will keep;  
This season means exactly what it says.  
Our eyes turn skyward yet our roots go deep;  
What lies ahead is anybody's guess,  
But, for the moment, we are done with sleep.

~Bob Smith. (b.1957) UU Minister and poet

### Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. Describe something that you have trusted since childhood and never lost faith in?
2. When broken trust left you broken-hearted, what voice in your head or word from a friend helped you pick up the pieces?
3. It's been said that trust is choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions. How does this make you see yourself or any of your relationships in a new light?
4. How has trusting people gotten easier or harder as you've grown older?
5. When did trust in the Divine leave your life? Do you ever feel a longing for it to return?

**Sitting in Silence** Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear readings.

### Readings- Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings

A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking, because her trust is not in the branch but in her own wings.

~Charlie Wardle, Accountant, Finance Director, CEO Health and Wellbeing Charity-Climb Your Mountain

You may be deceived if you trust too much, but you will live in torment if you don't trust enough.

~ Frank Crane, (1861-1928) American clergyman and popular writer

It's a good thing to have all the props pulled out from under us occasionally. It gives us some sense of what is rock under our feet, and what is sand.

~Madeleine L'Engle, (1918-2007) American writer of Christian fiction and science fiction

The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.

~Ernest Hemingway, (1899-1961) American novelist and short story writer

Everybody loves butterflies. But I trust the caterpillars more. I trust the ones who know they aren't done yet.

~Andrea Gibson, (b.1975) American poet and activist

Distrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful.

~Friedrich Nietzsche, (1844-1900) German philosopher, essayist, and cultural critic

I don't trust anyone who doesn't laugh.

~Maya Angelo, (1928-2014) American multi-talented author, poet, civil rights activist

I don't trust people who are alive and paying attention and don't feel the pain about what's happening.

~andrea maree brown, (b. 1978) American writer, activist, and facilitator

Our mistrust of the future makes it hard to give up the past.

~Chuck Palahniuk, (b.1962) American novelist

**Sitting in Silence** – Time to reflect on the questions and readings before sharing begins.

**Sharing** - This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Deep listening means no interrupting, no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Please share responses to one or more of the session questions or readings.

(This is usually a good time to take a brief break)

### **Open Discussion Response- Hold Up & Hold Out**

Hold up with gratitude one thing you heard in the sharing that especially struck you as you listened. Hold out how that connects to your life or clarified something about your own situation. Continue to practice deep listening.

### **Closing reading:**

May we remember that trust, like love, grows in small moments:

In promises kept and confidences held,

In boundaries respected and amends made,

In showing up again and again.

May we be brave enough to risk trust,

Patient enough to build it slowly,

And gentle with ourselves and others when it breaks.

~Rev. Angeline C. Jackson, Jamaican UU Minister, Public Speaker, LGBTQ+ human rights activist

### **Announcements/Plans**

**Check out:** As we close today, how are you feeling now?

### **Extinguish the Chalice**

*We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment.*

*These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.*

## ***Optional Spiritual Exercise -Living Love Through the Practice of Trust What Do You Turn To?***

We trust in more things than we may realize. And one of the ways we reveal and remember that is to think about what we turn to when things get hard, stressful, confusing or even frightening. That's what this complete-the-sentence exercise is all about. The list below lists a bunch of universally challenging moments and then leaves space for you to name what you turn to in these situations. The goal is to remind yourself that life has surrounded you with more sources of trust than you can imagine.

- *We encourage you to go off-script as needed, changing, deleting, skipping or adding to the "When..." statement scenarios we put in.*
- *The "When..." statements are purposely written in both poetic language with the hope that it might open you to responses you may not expect. It will help to not overthink your responses but instead allow yourself to free-associate and listen to answers that rise up on their own.*

To help you on your way, we suggest you read through this beautiful poem and reflection by writer and therapist Lisa Olivera: <https://lisaolivera.substack.com/p/what-do-you-turn-toward>

When my path turns uncertain, I turn to...

When my path turns rocky and my footing is unsure, I turn to...

When I want to feel my joy more fully, I turn to...

When rage clouds my vision, I turn to...

When injustice dissolves my hope, I turn to...

When a dream of mine comes true, I turn to...

When flawed and fragile human beings hurt or disappointment me and I want to keep tethered to compassion for them, I turn to...

When I am weary and long for rest, I turn to...

When I doubt myself and am in need of courage, I turn to...

When clear-cut answers elude me and I become frozen by indecision, I turn to...

When I miss those who have been taken from me by death or time, I turn to...

When I want to remember that life is a glorious gift, I turn to...